

# Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Resources

Depression and burnout are more common in physicians than the general population<sup>1</sup>. Reasons for higher prevalence in physicians includes long work hours, less self-care activities, less time with family and friends, and financial stressors<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, depression and burnout are particularly common amongst trainees, with studies finding one in five residents met criteria for depression while three of four residents met criteria for burnout<sup>3,4</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic has only heightened the problem of physician depression as one study found trainees exposed to COVID-19 patients were more likely to experience high levels of stress and burnout compared to those without exposure<sup>5</sup>.

There are many reasons physicians do not seek treatment for themselves when distressed including fear of discrimination in credentialing and licensure, changes to liability insurance, negative impact upon career advancement, and a medical culture that stigmatizes mental health issues and views seeking help as weakness<sup>6</sup>. If you are ever feeling overwhelmed, have poor sleep, note an increase in your drinking or smoking, or feel helpless and hopeless, please seek help. Physicians want to take great care of their patients, and that starts with taking care of themselves. Please utilize the resources below if you feel depressed, anxious, suicidal, burnt out, or just feel like you need some additional support.

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provide free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to talk to a trained crisis worker at a local crisis center who will provide support and share resources that may be helpful to you.

You can also visit their website <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/talk-to-someone-now/> to chat with a crisis worker instead of calling.

## Psychology Today

Through the Psychology Today website, you can find therapists, psychiatrists, treatment centers, and support groups near you if you decide you would like to seek emotional support and guidance to help fight your stressors or medical management of your anxiety or depression.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>

## Mental Health Screening

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance has screening tools on their website for anxiety, depression, and mania that you can use to help determine if you are experiencing any of these conditions.

<https://www.dbsalliance.org/education/mental-health-screening-center/>

Facilitating Help-Seeking Behavior Among Medical Trainees and Physicians Using the Interactive Screening Program

<https://www.datocms-assets.com/12810/1578321959-mortali-moutier-facilitating-help-seeking-behavior-in-physicians-using-isp-jmr-2018.pdf>

## Litigation Stress Resources

Litigation can be a significant source of stress for physicians. The Physician Litigation Stress Resource Center offers support resources and information on how to navigate the litigation experience.

<https://physicianlitigationstress.org/>

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2017. 2017.
2. Andrew LB. Physician Suicide. *Medscape*. 2018.
3. Fahrenkopf AM, Sectish TC, Barger LK, et al. Rates of medication errors among depressed and burnt out residents: prospective cohort study. *BMJ*. 2008;336(7642):488-491.
4. Mata DA, Ramos MA, Bansal N, et al. Prevalence of Depression and Depressive Symptoms Among Resident Physicians: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Jama*. 2015;314(22):2373-2383.
5. Kannampallil TG, Goss CW, Evanoff BA, Strickland JR, McAlister RP, Duncan J. Exposure to COVID-19 patients increases physician trainee stress and burnout. *PloS one*. 2020;15(8):e0237301.
6. Taylor WD, Blackford JU. Mental Health Treatment for Front-Line Clinicians During and After the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic: A Plea to the Medical Community. *Annals of internal medicine*. 2020;173(7):574-575.